

REPORT TITLE: ADOPTION OF WINCHESTER AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN  
2017-2023

26 APRIL 2017

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Cllr Warwick, Portfolio Holder for Environment

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WARD(S): ALL TOWN WARDS

PURPOSE

In December 2016, Cabinet approved a set of 9 actions to form the core of a new five-year Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for central Winchester ([CAB2869](#) Approval of Key Measures for Winchester Air Quality Action Plan, 7 December 2016 refers). These actions represented a programme of work that Members felt would be deliverable, affordable, broadly acceptable and effective in reducing Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) concentrations in the designated Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) to meet the requirements of Section 84(2) of the Environment Act 1995.

Appended to this Report is the final draft of the AQAP, and also a summary of the consultation responses with a note of any change made to the Plan in response to this feedback.

Members are asked to adopt the Plan, subject to any minor amendments as a result of discussions at Cabinet today.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To Cabinet

1. That the Winchester Air Quality Action Plan 2017-2023 at Appendix 1 be adopted by the Council;
2. That cabinet delegates authority to the Assistant Director (Economy and Communities) to make minor subsequent amendments to the plan, where appropriate, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment.

## IMPLICATIONS:

### 1 COUNCIL STRATEGY OUTCOME

1.1 Ensuring that the Council is fulfilling its statutory duties in relation to air quality is important to the delivery of the outcome of “improving the health and happiness of our community”. The AQAP supports the Council’s commitment to:

- Ensure that a holistic approach to travel and movement is integrated into all Council plans and strategies, to improve health and reduce emissions
- Promote active communities by supporting programmes accessible to all residents to encourage increased physical activity across the District
- Work with partners to improve the health of all residents in the District

### 2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

2.1 Each of the measures proposed for the AQAP will have an associated cost, although some may be absorbed into existing revenue budgets or incorporated into capital works when they are planned (e.g. more electric charging points in car parks).

2.2 The Plan spans a five year period from 2017 to 2023: it is neither practical nor desirable to scope and cost each action right at the outset because of the changing background context to this work. Each action is in itself a project, albeit it some are relatively modest in scope, and will be managed as such with costings, risks, stakeholders and a communications plan to support each one. Projects will be authorised following usual Council procedures as they become due for delivery, so any requirement for addition funding can be clarified at that time – and wherever possible as part of the annual budgeting cycle ahead of the due date for delivery.

2.3 The base budget already provides for the statutory monitoring of emissions required by Government (via permanent monitoring stations) and the independent annual review of monitoring data.

### 3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Since the implementation of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 all local authorities have been under a duty to review air quality within their district. This involves measuring air pollution and trying to predict how it will change in the coming years. The aim of the review is to make sure that the statutory [national air quality objectives](#) will be achieved throughout the UK by the relevant deadlines. These objectives were based on World Health Organisation limits, and put in place to protect people's health and the environment.

3.2 The current objectives that have to be met are set out in the Air Quality (England) Regulations 2010. It is a requirement that each local authority conducts a formal staged review of air quality within its district in accordance with a comprehensive set of guidance documents. These reports are then

sent to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) for approval. Where compliance with such objectives is unlikely then the local authority has to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and put together a plan to improve the air quality - a Local Air Quality Action Plan.

- 3.3 In adopting a new AQAP in 2017, the Council will be demonstrating its commitment to meeting its statutory obligations. By ensuring that the measures in the Plan can largely be delivered by the Council and are not reliant on external partners or funding, it will be more credible and easier to deliver.

#### 4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There is an ongoing workload associated with the delivery of an AQAP, with monitoring and review of emissions are already accommodated within the Environmental Health and Licensing Team.
- 4.2 As set out at section 2 above, each of the actions in the Plan form a project and will be structured accordingly. Project teams will draw on the time, skills and expertise of officers from across the Council, and potentially key stakeholders and partner organisations.
- 4.3 The project to develop a new AQAP has already benefited from a short term, part time secondment to administer and manage the process, and consultancy support for technical modelling, advice and drafting of the Plan. As each individual project becomes due for delivery, additional resources such as these may be identified as required and requests submitted through the usual corporate channels.
- 4.4 The measures propose include a review of staff travel plans and policies to increase sustainable and low-emissions travel by staff. A briefing on the draft AQAP was given to the senior management team in January 2017, and these two measures were identified as being of particular interest to colleagues: indeed the heightened awareness of air quality issues arising from the briefing has already prompted teams to think differently around replacement fleet vehicles and lease cars and there has been a noticeable shift from diesel to cleaner petrol and hybrid vehicles in a short space of time.

#### 5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None arising directly from this Report.

#### 6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 The AQAP was developed in close consultation with those local stakeholder groups which were best placed to make informed contributions through a steering group. A rounded view of the options was required, taking into account not just impact but also affordability, acceptability and deliverability. Winchester Action on Climate Change carried out two 'straw poll' consultation activities for the general public last Autumn, summarised in [CAB2869](#) Approval of Key Measures for Winchester Air Quality Action Plan, 7

December 2016. This explored public support for options in principle, but did not seek to consider detailed proposals, affordability or deliverability (e.g. for further pedestrianisation of the town centre).

- 6.2 Expert advice and modelling was provided by external consultants who drafted the Plan, and data analysis on the sources of pollutants had been commissioned previously from another, independent consultancy.
- 6.3 The public consultation on the draft AQAP in January/February 2017 was therefore focussed on the delivery of the plan, asking about timings, unanticipated impacts and practicalities rather than inviting further debate on the proposed measures in the Plan.
- 6.4 As well as inviting general public feedback through the Council's Citizen Space e-consultation portal, dedicated meetings were held with representatives of Winchester Business Improvement District (BID), Hampshire Chamber of Commerce, Hampshire County Council Highways Officers, Winchester Town Forum (via an informal presentation to Members), Winchester Friends of the Earth and Winchester Action on Climate Change.
- 6.5 There is a requirement for the draft AQAP to be considered by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and they have made a number of comments which in turn have assisted in the development of the final draft at Appendix 1 more robust.
- 6.6 At these meetings, a developed version of the proposed AQAP was shared and feedback received on issues to consider in relation to delivery timescales, unanticipated consequences and possible mitigation measures required.
- 6.7 A summary of the consultation feedback is attached at Appendix 2. This shows feedback from organisations and from the general public, with a proposed response as to whether this should lead to changes to the AQAP. Members may wish to review the proposed responses and consider whether any further changes to the AQAP at Appendix 1 should be made.
- 6.8 Officers have noted all the consultations received, which are set out in Appendix A of the plan and recognise and appreciate their active engagement in finalising the plan.

## 7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 Poor air quality has a detrimental effect on health, aggravating respiratory and cardiovascular conditions and it has been identified as a significant cause of premature deaths by Public Health England.
- 7.2 Reducing pollutants in the environment also supports delivery of the Council's ambition to "improve the quality of the District's environment", specifically
  - By working with our partners and by using powers available to us, make Winchester a safe and pleasant place to live, work and visit

- Find creative ways to reduce harmful emissions, based on sound evidence and holistic transport planning

7.3 High levels of NO<sub>2</sub> and NO (nitrogen monoxide) damage plant life. NO<sub>2</sub> contributes to the formation of acid rain, damaging vegetation, buildings and water bodies. It is involved in the formation of ground level ozone, which damages vegetation and other materials.

## 8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 No impact assessment has been carried out for the AQAP as a whole, but individual projects within it will be subject to such assessment. Overall, the Plan is intended to improve health outcomes and will benefit those suffering from long term breathing and lung conditions.

## 9 RISK MANAGEMENT

| <b>Risk</b>   | <b>Mitigation</b>  | <b>Opportunities</b>  |
|---|--|---|
| <p><i>Community Support</i></p> <p>It is certain that the Action Plan measures will not be universally supported, due to the perceived inconvenience, expense, business impacts etc</p>   | <p>Involvement of local stakeholder groups in developing the AQAP</p> <p>AQAP based on robust evidence of impacts</p> <p>Elected Members make final choice of high impact actions</p> <p>Public comment period offers opportunity to consider unforeseen impacts</p> | <p>An education programme aimed at supporting behavioural change / perceptions over the early years of the AQAP could be considered.</p>  |
| <p><i>Timescales / Project Capacity</i></p> <p>The Planning Inspector examining Local Plan Part 2 was advised that a new AQAP was being produced in line with the actions in the Council's Portfolio Plans for 2015/16. Government is also pressing for action to reduce emissions. There is therefore an expectation that the Council will move rapidly to deliver the Plan and the actions within it.</p> | <p>Dedicated support for development of the AQAP has been secured, in the form of external consultants to draft it and an internal secondment to provide administration and project management.</p>  | <p>A thorough resourcing delivery assessment of the action plan needs to be taken into account, to ensure results are achieved. This will be delivered through identified task and finish groups, who through the Air Quality Steering Group, will report back to members in line with the annual budget round.</p> |

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|--|--|--|
| <p>The Council is committed to working with key partners, but delivery can be delayed significantly if Council priorities and obligations are not in alignment with those of delivery partners.</p>  | <p>The measures for the new AQAP take into account reliance on third party delivery.</p>   |  |
| <p><i>Financial / VfM</i></p> <p>High impact measures required to bring emissions under legal limits are inevitably not low cost measures, although these are included in the 2006 and 2016 plans. Expenditure on such measures will impact on other services/projects being planned by the Council in the coming years. There may also be an impact on income – e.g. from parking fees and Business Rates.</p>                        | <p>External consultants TRL have provided indicative costings for the proposed high impact measures for Members to consider in reaching their decisions.</p>   |  |
| <p><i>Legal / Reputation</i></p> <p>The Council has a statutory obligation to meet air quality limits, and is currently not meeting this obligation. This could lead to a legal challenge, potential sanctions by Government and reputational damage for the Council. It could also mean that Government imposes more stringent, statutory measures on Winchester which could be avoided if effective local action is taken first.</p> | <p>The experience of delivering the 2006 Plan has informed recommended options for the new AQAP, in order to ensure that it enables the Council to meet its obligations effectively over the coming 5 years.</p> |  |

## 10 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

### Background

- 10.1 In November 2003 the Council declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) within Winchester city centre. An Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) was adopted by the Council in 2006. This consisted of 21 actions to reduce NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations in order to meet the requirements of Section 84(2) of the Environment Act 1995.

- 10.2 The Government requires a combination of annual progress and monitoring reports for AQMAs, and the Council has commissioned these in line with the Act. In spite of actions taken to date, NO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Winchester city centre do not comply with the statutory limits. This is not a unique picture, with many other cities not complying – and indeed the UK as a whole. The Government may therefore - in due course – choose to impose more stringent, nationally-chosen measures and Winchester would have no choice but to adopt them. A letter was sent from Defra on 14 November 2016 reminding the Council of its duties and powers in relation to air quality and urging further action to tackle emissions levels. At present, the City Council is free to develop an AQAP which reflects a more local approach and to manage the situation in a way that is appropriate for residents and businesses.
- 10.3 In spite of an improvement in monitoring data recorded at the bottom of St George's Street in 2016, there are still poor air quality 'hot spots' further up St George's Street, Chesil Street and the Romsey Road. The annual mean set for NO<sub>2</sub> emissions at relevant exposure locations is 40µg/m<sup>3</sup>. However, this figure can be as high as 60µg/m<sup>3</sup> due to factors such as:
- The narrow width of the street, with buildings on either side impeding dispersal of emissions;
  - The weight of traffic, particularly during peak travel times;
  - The queueing of traffic – with engines idling – for traffic lights, behind unloading lorries etc.
- 10.4 There is some inevitable impact from the nearby motorway on background levels: the Council needs to reduce NO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the city centre by an additional third in order to offset the effect of external sources such as this motorway. Such emissions are likely to decline over the long term - with Government pursuing its own responsibility for improving air quality and with newer models of vehicle being 'cleaner' - which is in part why there is a mechanism for an annual review of the AQAP included within it. This will take into account latest monitoring figures, provided by the Council's new monitoring equipment installed in recent weeks, and emerging plans and policies (e.g. Hampshire County Council's Movement Study).
- 10.5 Nine core actions were agreed by Cabinet ([CAB2869](#) – Approval of Key Measures for Winchester Air Quality Action Plan – 7 December 2016), following several months of discussion with leading Members and Officers. These took into account feedback from key stakeholders working as the Air Quality Steering Group, which assessed various data sources and modelled information provided by independent consultants. Officers believe that the resulting AQAP for Winchester is deliverable, affordable and acceptable to both the business and resident community.
- 10.6 In January, the draft AQAP was published for consultation. This was not intended to explore the choice of measures in the plan, but to understand any unanticipated impacts or considerations around implementation. A record of the consultation responses can be found in Appendix A of the AQAP.

- 10.7 Cabinet is now asked to adopt the AQAP at Appendix 1. If Members have any minor amendments to propose, these may be referred to the Assistant Director (Economy and Communities) to consider in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, in the usual way.
- 10.8 It is recognised that the AQAP is a long and detailed document, which was necessary in order to meet DEFRA guidance and the expectation of more expert stakeholders. A summary document will be produced by officers for publication on the Council's website. In preparation for this, the Air Quality web pages have already been reviewed and significantly improved to make them less dense and technical, whilst making them easier to follow and to navigate. Members can find them at [www.winchester.gov.uk/environment/air-quality/](http://www.winchester.gov.uk/environment/air-quality/)

## 11 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 11.1 The core measures for the AQAP were decided by Cabinet in December 2016, and as such the final draft does not offer additional options. It does, however, reflect a number of general improvements to terminology, wording, presentation and clarity which will be helpful in creating a shared approach to improving air quality in Winchester.
- 11.2 Because there is an annual review mechanism built into the Plan, there is still opportunity to bring forward new options for consideration as the policies and plans of other agencies (eg Hampshire County Council) evolve and as further monitoring data is collected and analysed.

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

#### Previous Committee Reports:-

[CAB2869](#) – Approval of Key Measures for Winchester Air Quality Action Plan – 7 December 2016

[Notice of Motion](#) to Council by Councillor Eleanor Bell – 20 July 2016

[OS027](#) – Air Quality Informal Scrutiny Group (ISG) Final Report, 23 January 2012

#### Other Background Documents:-

Refer to [CAB2869](#) above

### APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 Winchester Air Quality Action Plan: Final Draft for Adoption and Summary of Proposed Responses to Public Consultation